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New NAHMS Feedlot Study Begins

Projects by the USDA's National Animal Health Monitoring System (NAHMS) provide helpful and timely information to cattle producers.

In 1994, NAHMS' Cattle On Feed Evaluation (COFE) delivered a snapshot of animal health and management of cattle in feedlots in the U.S. Five years later, the industry is due for a follow-up, and NAHMS has developed a second nationwide project, the Feedlot '99 study.

NAHMS conducts national studies to collect data and develop the information industry members need most. During 1998, NAHMS explored existing information on the industry, finding out what changes in cattle and feedlot locations occurred since 1994 and what new information and data resources on feedlot issues have been developed.

Next, staff met with members of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), the Academy of Veterinary Consultants, university faculty, feedlot personnel, and regulatory officials to prioritize information needs that should and could be addressed by the 1999 NAHMS study.

Feedlot '99 Objectives

Comparable data from the 1994 COFE and the Feedlot '99 study will provide *trends in management and animal health* over the 5-year interim. NAHMS information will help researchers pinpoint areas of change and progress in beef health and management as well as identify needs and opportunities for the future.



Study Objectives

1. Describe changes in management practices and animal health in feedlots from 1994 to 1999.
2. Describe the management in feedlots that impacts product quality.
3. Identify factors associated with shedding of specified pathogens by feedlot cattle, such as:
 - *E. coli* 0157
 - *Salmonellae* spp.
 - *Campylobacter* spp.
4. Describe antimicrobial usage in feedlots.
5. Describe animal health management practices in feedlots and their relationship to cattle health.
6. Identify priority areas for pre-arrival processing of cattle and calves.



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Feedlot '99 Needs Assessment Activities

- One-on-one interviews with members of the feedlot industry over several months.
- Focus group at Colorado State University, November 6, 1998, in Fort Collins CO.
- National Cattlemen's Beef Association Quality Assurance Advisory Board meeting, December 2-3, 1998, in Denver CO.
- Academy of Veterinary Consultants' meeting, December 3-5, 1998, in Denver CO.
- NCBA Cattle Industry Convention, February 10-14, 1999, in Charlotte NC. (Feedlot '99 study objectives were presented and approved by the Animal Disease Research Subcommittee.)
- Academy of Veterinary Consultants' meeting, April 8-10, 1999, in Amarillo TX.

In 1994, *quality assurance* and *preharvest food safety* were among the industry's top information needs.

These two concepts are just as high, if not higher, on the industry's list of priorities for 1999. For product quality, Feedlot '99 will focus on injection routes and locations, implant strategies in use, and management practices that affect hide quality.

To identify factors associated with pathogens such as *Escherichia coli* (i.e., *E. coli* O157), *Salmonella* (e.g., *Salmonella typhimurium* DT104), and *Campylobacter*, NAHMS will document patterns of pathogen shedding and evaluate those factors that contribute to shedding. Identification of economically feasible management practices could help feedlot producers decrease pathogen shedding and increase consumer confidence in, and demand for, beef products.

Use of antimicrobials for food animals and development of antimicrobial resistance is a more recent, but extremely important, issue facing all feedlot owners and managers, veterinarians, and consumers. The 1999 study will identify types of antimicrobials in use in the U.S. and the extent to which they are used.

NAHMS is in a unique position to collect these data from large numbers of feedlots in the largest beef-producing states. NAHMS relies on voluntary participation, so confidentiality is a top priority. The Feedlot '99 study will begin in August as Enumerators from the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) contact hundreds of eligible participants from 12 states and collect preliminary management data. To ensure the study will provide answers to the right questions, experts in feedlot production from the NCBA, Academy of Veterinary Consultants, American Association of Bovine Practitioners, and other industry consultants were involved in questionnaire development.

States Participating in the Feedlot '99 Study



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Large numbers of producers contributing data to Feedlot '99 will enhance accuracy of study results. Ultimately, broad producer participation in the Feedlot '99 study will increase both individual study benefits and benefits to the industry as a whole.

For More Information

In addition to the 1994 COFE, NAHMS has conducted national studies of other animal populations, such as beef cow-calf, dairy cattle, sheep, swine, catfish, and equine. Please contact NAHMS for more information or review results of NAHMS studies on the World Wide Web at:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs/ceah/cahm>

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